

E-FILED 11/30/07

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA
SAN JOSE DIVISION

FACEBOOK, INC., et al

Plaintiffs,

v.

CONNECTU LLC, et al.

Defendants.

Case No. C 07-01389 RS

**ORDER GRANTING MOTION TO
DISMISS CLAIMS AGAINST
DEFENDANTS CAMERON
WINKLEVOSS, TYLER
WINKLEVOSS, AND DIVYA
NARENDRA**

I. INTRODUCTION

Defendants Cameron Winklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss, and Divya Narendra move to dismiss the claims against them on grounds that prior to removal of this action to this court, the Santa Clara Superior Court ruled that none of them was subject to personal jurisdiction in California. Defendants contend that ruling precludes plaintiffs relitigating personal jurisdiction here. Plaintiffs Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg (collectively "Facebook"), in turn contend that they have discovered and pleaded new facts that were not before the Superior Court that make reconsideration of jurisdiction appropriate and that support personal jurisdiction over the moving defendants. Although Facebook has discovered additional factual *detail* and have incorporated numerous

1 allegations bearing on jurisdiction into the amended complaint, it has not shown that the basic facts
2 on which it now relies are any different from those presented to the Superior Court. Accordingly,
3 the Superior Court's decision remains conclusive here, and the motion to dismiss will be granted.

4 5 II. BACKGROUND

6 The general background of this action has been described in prior orders and will not be
7 repeated here. Relevant to this motion is the following: When this action was initiated in Santa
8 Clara Superior Court, the named defendants included Cameron Winklevoss, Tyler Winklevoss, and
9 Divya Narendra. The Winklevosses and Narendra are three founders of defendant ConnectU.¹ They
10 promptly filed a motion to quash service of summons, arguing that they were not subject to personal
11 jurisdiction in California. ConnectU itself did not contest jurisdiction.

12 Facebook sought and was granted leave to take jurisdictional discovery before the motion to
13 quash was heard. Even prior to the filing of this action, Facebook had been taking discovery from
14 ConnectU in connection with litigation between them pending in the District of Massachusetts. By
15 virtue of the Massachusetts discovery, Facebook was aware before this action was filed that Winston
16 Williams of Pacific Northwest Software ("PNS") had assisted ConnectU in collecting email
17 addresses from the Facebook website and that it had used those addresses with the "social butterfly"
18 software. In the jurisdictional discovery, Facebook learned additional facts regarding PNS's
19 development of an "automated" process for sending emails to addresses found on the Facebook site,
20 as well as facts regarding the individual defendants' prior manual collection of addresses from the
21 site.

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26 ¹ There has been significant controversy regarding the role Narendra originally was
27 expected to have and regarding how and when anyone became actual "members" of the
28 ConnectU LLC. Those matters are discussed in a contemporaneously-filed order denying
plaintiffs' sanction motion. Regardless of that controversy, the characterization of Narendra
as a "founder" appears fair.

1 In opposing the motion to quash, Facebook cited to and relied on evidence regarding both the
 2 manual collection of email addresses and the subsequent automatic processes. For reasons it did not
 3 explain, the Superior Court rejected Facebook's arguments and granted the motion to quash.²

4 Facebook subsequently filed an amended complaint in the Superior Court that added certain
 5 claims but that omitted the Winklevosses and Narendra as defendants. Based on claims that had
 6 been added under federal law, ConnectU then removed the action to this Court and brought a motion
 7 to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(6) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure. The Court granted that
 8 motion in part, with leave to amend. Facebook then filed a second amended complaint that not only
 9 addressed the matters that had been raised by the motion to dismiss, but that also (1) added Mark
 10 Zuckerberg as a plaintiff, (2) added certain new individual defendants, and (3) renamed as
 11 defendants the Winklevoss brothers and Narendra.

12 Defendants objected to Facebook adding parties without leave of Court. By order issued June
 13 14, 2007, the Court in effect granted Facebook *post hoc* leave to add the parties, but without
 14 prejudice to any substantive arguments as to why they should not be made parties. The present
 15 motion to dismiss followed.

17 III. DISCUSSION

18 Although the parties have characterized the legal precedents differently, there is no real
 19 conflict in their respective positions, or in the cases they cite, as to the circumstances under which a
 20 prior state court jurisdictional determination will be deemed conclusive in a subsequent federal
 21 proceeding. Put simply, if a plaintiff can show *new and different* facts supporting jurisdiction, then
 22 the prior determination may be revisited. See *Kendall v. Overseas Dev. Corp.*, 700 F.2d 536, 539
 23 (9th Cir. 1983) ("the dispositive question is whether [plaintiff] pleaded any new facts in the federal
 24 litigation that would support a different result on the issue of jurisdiction."). If, however, the facts
 25 are those that the prior court found insufficient to support jurisdiction, then "even if wrong, an

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 27 ²Howard Winklevoss, the father of Tyler and Cameron Winklevoss, was also named
 28 as a defendant and was a party to the motion to quash. Facebook has not attempted to bring
 him back into this litigation.

1 earlier decision involving the same issue and the same parties, ‘is as conclusive as a correct’ one.”
2 *Gupta v. Thai Airways Intern. Ltd.*, 487 F.3d. 759, 767 (9th Cir. 2007) (quoting *MIB, Inc. v.*
3 *Superior Court*, 106 Cal.App.3d 228, 235).

4 Here, Facebook insists it has discovered and pleaded significant new evidence bearing on
5 personal jurisdiction over the Winklevoss brothers and Narendra. Certainly the second amended
6 complaint appears to have been drafted with an eye to preempting the argument that personal
7 jurisdiction is lacking; the complaint is replete with assertions that defendants acted with intent and
8 knowledge that their activities would have effects in this forum. Nevertheless, Facebook has not
9 shown that any of the evidence on which it now relies is materially different from that it previously
10 presented to the Superior Court. At most, Facebook has now garnered additional *details*, but the
11 basic conduct it contends is sufficient to give rise to jurisdiction is the *same* conduct it pointed to in
12 the state court motion to quash proceedings.

13 As noted, the Superior Court did not explain the basis for its decision, leaving it uncertain as
14 to precisely what evidence might or might not have been sufficient to cause it to reach a different
15 result. Because Facebook is relying now on “contacts” that do not differ significantly in kind or in
16 quantity than those it presented during the motion to quash, however, there is no particular reason to
17 believe the “new” details would have changed the result.

18 Although Facebook attempts to argue that a different result is warranted in light of “new”
19 evidence, it is apparent that Facebook actually believes the Superior Court simply got it wrong.³
20 Particularly given that this Court has demonstrated an unwillingness to accept the so-called
21 “fiduciary shield” argument, Facebook appears to believe that it can obtain a different result by
22 arguing the merits better or slightly differently.⁴ Rearguing the same basic facts, however, is not
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24 ³ In its motion for sanctions, Facebook candidly suggests that the Superior Court
25 accepted defendants’ legally untenable argument that actions they took on behalf of
26 ConnectU did not count as personal contacts with the forum. Although the order regarding
the sanctions motion filed contemporaneously with this decision rejects that conclusion as
unduly speculative, it does show that in Facebook’s view, the Superior Court simply erred.

27 ⁴ At the hearing, defense counsel effectively conceded that if this Court were free to
28 reconsider the issues, then under the reasoning this Court employed in denying the motion to
dismiss brought by Winston Williams and PNS, personal jurisdiction would be proper over

1 permissible. Even if the Superior Court reached an incorrect legal determination, the outcome is
2 conclusive. Facebook “does not now get a do-over.” *Gupta, supra*, 487 F.3d at 767.

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4 IV. CONCLUSION

5 For the reasons set forth above the motion to dismiss is granted.

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7 IT IS SO ORDERED.

8 Dated: November 30, 2007

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10 RICHARD SEEBORG
11 United States Magistrate Judge
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27 Cameron Winklevoss. Defendants contend that even in those circumstances personal
28 jurisdiction would not be proper over Tyler Winklevoss or Narendra because there is no
evidence they personally participated in any allegedly wrongful conduct at a time when
Facebook was located in California.